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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: APRIL 13, 2009

Summary: Local political developments dominated headlines in all newspapers on Monday. All newspaper front-paged reports that "President Zardari forwarded the Nizam-i-Adl regulation to Prime Minister Gilani for a parliamentary debate." The English daily, "The News," reported that "President Zardari decided to let all the political parties share the burden of signing the controversial deal with the Taliban by throwing the ball in the court of the Parliament." According to a front-page story in daily, "Dawn," Taliban from Swat "started recruiting youth in Buner." In another story the same paper reported that "cracks are beginning to appear in strategic relations" between Pakistan and the United States "over India's enhanced role in Afghanistan." Newspapers also quoted Pakistan Foreign Minister Qureshi as saying that "ISI is in the process of being restructured and cleansed." Also prominently displayed were the reports about the arrival of Senator John Kerry to Pakistan.

Major dailies ran editorials on the current state of Pak-U.S. relations. The English daily, "Dawn," noted that "the systematic pressure being exerted on Pakistan is souring relations with America by the day. America, apparently, has come to see South Asia through the eyes of India." Another English daily, "The Nation," observed that "it is a pity that the U.S. has been allowed to take liberties with Pakistan since 9/11, and drone attacks are one such manifestation." End Summary.

News Stories

"Adl Regulation Goes To parliament; ANP Threat To quit Govt." "Dawn" (04/13)

"The government has announced that it will table the Nizam-i-Adl regulation 2009 in the National Assembly on Monday to seek legislators' opinion if it should be approved by President Asif Ali Zardari. According to a handout, the President forwarded the regulation to Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani with the advice that he might consider placing it before Parliament for debate."

"Zardari Throws The Taliban Deal In Nawaz Camp" "The News" (04/13)

"Resisting pressure from the establishment, President Asif Zardari in a dramatic move, has decided to let all the political parties share the burden of signing the controversial deal with the Taliban by throwing the ball in the court of Parliament. Zardari does not want to be held responsible for any negative fallout if this deal backfires in future, as then Parliament will be responsible."

"MPs Opposing Bill Will Be Considered Infidels: Taliban" "The Nation" (04/13)

"Amir Izat Khan and Haji Muslim Khan, the spokesmen of Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) and Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), Swat Chapter, respectively, on Sunday said that those members of the Parliament who would oppose the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation bill would be considered as apostates."

"Uncertainty About Swat Judicial System Growing" "The News" (04/13)

"Uncertainty about the future form of judicial system in Swat valley is fast growing among people as the old courts have stopped functioning while the new legal system - a hybrid of traditional and Islamic laws envisaged in Nizam-e-Adl Regulation - still awaits approval of the president to become operational."

"Taliban Start Recruiting Youths In Buner" "Dawn" (04/13)

"The Taliban from Swat, who have taken a number of areas in Buner, are converting mosques in Buner into recruitment centers to urge youths to join their ranks."

"Pakistan-U.S. Ties Under Severe Strain" "Dawn" (04/13)

"Cracks are beginning to appear in strategic relations between Pakistan and the United States over India's enhanced role in Afghanistan. Background interviews show that strains in relations are more serious than meet the eye, requiring the two allies to address the issues seriously. The ties are in a very delicate condition. 'There are very few options left for the two allies - if neither conceded some ground, they will enter into an all out confrontation,' a diplomat said."

"Foreign Minister Says ISI Being Restructured" "The Nation" (04/13)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said the ISI is in the process of being restructured and cleansed in the wake of suggestions that elements of the agency allegedly have links with the Al-Qaeda and Taliban, he told CNN-IBN in an interview."

"Senator John Kerry Arrives Today" "The Nation" (04/13)

"A top U.S. Senator John Kerry arrives in Islamabad today (Monday) on a two-day visit to discuss various bilateral, regional and global issues with top Pakistani leadership with focus on future civilian and military aid to Islamabad from Washington."

"U.S. Lawmaker Urges Cooperation With Pakistan" "The News" (04/13)

"President Obama is engaged in cleaning up the consequences of bad political and economic policies of his predecessor. He needs good advice and capable advisers in his historic role as President of the U.S. in these troubled times, a veteran U.S. Congressman told a select group of Pakistanis at a dinner. Chairman of the House Government Reforms & Oversight Committee Rep Edolphus Towns said that he will fully support the bills introduced in the U.S. Congress for U.S. aid to Pakistan."

"U.S. Plans Go Beyond Pak Existence" "The News" (04/12)

"Two former top American officials have said that if the U.S. failed over any important issue in Pakistan and subsequently Pakistan dismembered, then Washington will have to either hand over Pakistan and Afghanistan to terrorists and extremists or fight against them with or without world help. Former U.S. National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and former American Secretary of State Henry Kissinger expressed these views during Dr Shahid Masood's program Mairay Mutabiq of Geo News, Saturday."

"U.S. To Respect Pakistan's 'Red Lines': Holbrooke" "The News" (04/12)

"U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke has made it clear that the U.S. would respect Pakistan's 'red lines' about American combat troops, adding that elimination of terrorism and militancy from Pakistan was the top priority of the

new U.S. strategy. 'Pakistan is at the centre of our strategic concerns,' Holbrooke said in an exclusive chat with U.S. newspaper Wall Street Journal."

"Qazi Links U.S. Aid To Capping Of Nuclear Program" "The News" (04/13)

"Former Chief of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Qazi Hussain Ahmad claimed on Sunday that the U.S. had linked its \$1.5 billion aid to an access to Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan and capping of Pakistan's nuclear program. 'The U.S. has never been our real friend and strategic partner, rather it wants the Indian hegemony in the region against China,' Qazi Hussain Ahmad told a public meeting in Mansehra."

"Attack on NATO Depot Leaves One Dead, 10 Trucks Guttled" "Dawn" (04/13)

"A worker was killed and two others were injured in a pre-dawn attack on terminals for trucks transporting supplies to NATO forces in Afghanistan, a police officer said."

"7 injured In Copters Shelling" "The News" (04/13)

"Three militants and four civilians were injured when the security forces shelled militants' hideouts through gunship choppers in Hangu and Lower Kurram area on Sunday."

"Strike Paralyzes Balochistan" "Dawn" (04/13)

"Riots continued across Balochistan on Sunday amid a strike against the killing of three Baloch nationalist leaders. Security forces used teargas and fired shots in the air to disperse the mobs blocking national highways."

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Editorials/Op-eds

"Ominous Conditions," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (04/13)

"The systematic pressure being exerted on Pakistan is souring relations with America by the day.... In an ill-advised departure from practical politics, the bill contains India-specific clauses that are bound to raise yet more hackles in Islamabad and the GHQ. It seems the Obama administration has bought the Indian line on Pakistan hook, line and sinker. America, apparently, has come to see South Asia through the eyes of India.... Pakistan is supposed to be America's front-line ally in the war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Yet Washington seems to repose greater trust in New Delhi than in Islamabad. This mindset will not deliver the desired results. The more tangled the web we weave, the greater the chance that neither Islamabad nor Washington - or New Delhi, for that matter - will emerge on the winning side."

"Unacceptable," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (04/13)

"Nevertheless, there is urgent need for Islamabad to take up the matter at the highest diplomatic level to make it emphatically clear to the Obama administration that the conditions mentioned in the proposed legislation on the subject ought to be deleted if there were to be smooth sailing in relations between the two countries, something that is of fundamental relevance to the success of U.S. objectives in the region.... It is a pity that the U.S. has been allowed to take liberties with Pakistan since 9/11, and drone strikes are one such manifestation. This encouraged the American policymakers and media to assume that U.S. troops could enter Pakistan to deal with terrorist elements."

"Rejecting American Aid?," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (04/13)

"The direct reference to India, despite the fact that Pakistan has bilaterally assured India that it will not allow any terrorism in India from its soil, may have offended Islamabad, but the next indirect reference to Dr. A.Q. Khan is certainly going to create hurdles in the U.S.-Pak cooperation in the coming days. Of course,

the sub-clause will bite only after Washington has made a move on Dr. Khan and Pakistan has thwarted it. Sub-clauses 'H' and 'I' ask Pakistan to get rid of the 'Taliban and Taliban-affiliated groups in Pakistan that support insurgents in Afghanistan.' If Pakistan sees these conditions as being hostile to its interests, it can turn the U.S. assistance down."

"Misplaced U.S. Notions About Pakistan," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (04/13)

"No one needs to worry about the survival of Pakistan and a few hundred so-called militants certainly cannot run over our Armed Forces and the masses. Therefore misplaced notions from the United States must come to an end. Policy makers in Washington need to stop dreaming and realize sooner the better that people of Pakistan have the capacity to get out of difficult situations as they did in the past and would not accept strings with meager aid or through propaganda campaign questioning its very survival."

"Relations With The U.S.," an op-ed by Talat Masood in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/13)

"Misunderstanding has arisen due to differences in perception about the nature of threat with Pentagon having its own set of priorities and the GHQ insisting on its own. Washington wants the Pakistan army to be fully focused on the western border and robustly engaged in counterinsurgency operations. There are differences about ISI maintaining links with militant groups in the tribal belt and in Afghanistan. These links of ISI are not meant to support these groups but to obtain information about their activities and using its influence to weaken one group against the other.... One thing is however clear that despite United States pervasive influence over Pakistan it will not be possible for it to act and political leaders and no amount of U.S. pressure will compel it to sever relations with them."

"Obama Threatens Pakistan," an op-ed by Roedad Khan in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/13)

"The Obama administration's program for Afghanistan and Pakistan is rash to the point of folly. I foresee a perilous voyage for the Americans. One thing is for sure. With more Americans in combat, there will certainly be greater losses. Obama is sending conventional troops to do an unconventional job in Afghanistan. He is bound to fail.... All our major problems stem from the American invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. It has turned our tribal area into a protracted ulcer, a quagmire - a place where Pakistan is spending blood and treasure to protect American interests.... If you want to know what happens to an ill-led and ill-governed, small country, which attaches itself to a powerful country like the United States, visit Pakistan."

"Games People Plan," an op-ed by Shahzad Chaudhry in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (04/13)

"Messrs Holbrooke and Mullen's visit last week has left the Af-Pak scene even more confused. More specifically, Pakistanis have clearly betrayed unease on how the entire spectrum of security and geo-politics is aimed to play out according to the revised American strategy for the region. Pakistan exhibited irritation and impatience on how the American envoys placed their case.... One thing is certain: Obama doesn't like being boxed in anywhere, and certainly not in Afghanistan. He will not let Afghanistan be another Vietnam - certainly not under another Democratic government."

"India: Major Problem In S. Asia," an op-ed by M. Ashraf Mirza in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (04/13)

"The United States should see the ground realities in the South Asian region realistically and take a holistic view of the situation rather than persisting with its single track policy of pressuring Pakistan to do more. India and the U.S. should not be unmindful of the consequence of Washington's inability to bring home to India the imperative need of shunning its doctrine of interference in the

internal affairs of its neighbors especially Pakistan. If Pakistan fails, India and the U.S. will not be safe from terrorists and militants. It's, therefore, time to act with prudence rather sheltering behind crafty moves in the name of diplomacy."

"Nizam-i-Adl Regulation And The Swat Peace Deal: Parliament Should Decide According To National Aspirations," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (04/13)

"This development [of presenting the Nizam-i-Adl regulation in the parliament] has come at a time when the U.S. has started opposing the Swat deal like it did in the case of the Wana and Shakai deals, and Sufi Muhammad has dismantled the Swat peace camp.... There should be no delay in debating the regulation and deal comprehensively if they are presented in the parliament today. By approving [the regulation] immediately, the President must be compelled to support the NWFP government's sincere efforts; the parliament should not worry at all about U.S. pressure in this regard."

"Decision To Present The Swat Peace Deal In The Parliament," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 100,000) (04/13)

"All reservations and objections will be laid to rest once this [Swat] deal is approved by the Parliament, as it would be a joint and unanimous decision. However, if there is no agreement on the issue, the parliament should suggest an alternative solution for peace in Swat and other areas. We hope that discussion on Swat in the parliament will lead to an improvement in the situation and the area would again become a peaceful haven."

"Decision To Present The Swat Deal In The Parliament," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (04/13)

"The parliament must approve the deal immediately so that this state of uncertainty in Swat can come to an end. There is no need to give too much importance to the hue and cry raised by elements known as the civil society because approval or rejection will not affect them. However, we must remember that the deal has a fundamental role for peace in the area."

"Deal In The Doldrums?," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (04/13)

"The peace agreement has been in the doldrums for some time as both sides continue to stick to their respective stance: the government asking the TTP activists to lay down their arms before asking the President to sign the Shariat Regulation and the TTP insisting that it should be other way round.... Rather than pussyfooting around the issue for so long the best course for the government could have been to use the peace agreement to get a foothold in the troubled region and gradually establish the writ of the state."

"Life In Swat After The Peace Deal," an op-ed by Farhat Taj in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/13)

"There are several new training camps in Swat where the Taliban train teenage boys for militancy. The boys belong to the schools that have been destroyed by the Taliban. Lack of occupation and the Jihadi preaching of the Taliban turn Swati young men to Jihad. Their schools are destroyed. The Taliban have banned TV and music and playing of cricket. The young men have no activity and the Taliban constantly invite them to Jihad. Hundreds of boys have joined the training camps, most of them without the permission of their parents. According to the Taliban's version of Jihad, parents' permission is not needed at all. The helpless parents have nobody to ask for help in order to stop their children from joining the Taliban. The Taliban threatens parents who stop their children from joining the so-called Jihad."

"Situation In Balochistan," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (04/13)

"Merely apologizing for past mistakes and forming a superficial committee is not enough to satisfy the Baloch nation which has been deprived of its own resources; especially at a time when the U.S.

and India are engaged in supporting extremist and anti-federation elements in the province thus taking the situation towards further deterioration. In this situation, the government must get to the root of facts surrounding the killing of 3 Baloch leaders and uncover elements involved in this crime, whether they are local or foreign."

Patterson